

Form C of D-90-CO

# City of Detroit

## INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: R. V. Marks, J. Bush, Q. Stoner

DATE January 12, 1968

FROM: L. Williams

SUBJECT: Fitzgerald Area Police Harassment Meeting

On 1-10-68 Joan Fraley and I attended a meeting at the Inferno Burger Clubhouse at Puritan and Cherrylawn. The meeting had been requested by Inspector Werner of the Palmer Park Station in response to citizen complaints of police harassment of the members of the Infernos Club.

Present at the meeting were the following:

Inspector Werner	-	Palmer Park Station
Lt. Herbert Heade	-	14th Precinct
Ralph Rosenfeld	-	President, Fitzgerald Community Council
Jim Trainor	-	Mayor Cavanagh's Office
Ernest Mazey	-	American Civil Liberties Union
Stan Lewin	-	Detroit Housing Commission
Rev. Lawrence Green	-	University of Detroit
Rev. Edward Allardice	-	Local Presbyterian Church
Norvell Harrington		
Stu House	-	SNCC
Gloria House	-	SNCC
Leon Atchison	-	Administrative Assistant to Congressman Conyers
James Garrett	-	Father of 1 of the boys

Also in attendance were about 15 to 20 parents, club members, and members of the Fitzgerald Community Council, and the local PTA units.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ralph Rosenfeld. The meeting opened with statements by the members of the Infernos group as to the actual occurrences which had brought about the meeting. **It seems that shortly after the group leased the hamburger stand, how used as a clubhouse, the police began a program of stopping and searching club members and their cars.** After many occurrences of this, Mrs. Foley took a group of the teenagers to the Palmer Park Station, where she spoke with the Lieutenant at the desk and demanded an explanation. She was told that if any irregularities existed, they would be taken care of.

**Starting the next day, the police began a more stern crackdown,** which included breaking into doors with drawn guns and taking many of the boys to the precinct stationhouse. The boys were always released without charges being filed. Inspector Werner at first defended the patrolmen's actions in breaking in with drawn guns, stating that there had been breaking and entering complaints and that he had many dead policemen who had broken in without drawn guns. The Inspector was interrupted in mid sentence by the teenagers demanding why officers had broken in the other five times with drawn guns. The Inspector was told of instances of police coming into the clubhouse making the statement "we're loaded for bear today". It was pointed out to the uninformed that this statement was supposedly a sophistication of the phrase "we're hunting coon". When the Inspector asked for specific instances of use of race

language and beration, one of the boys told of an instance where he had been searched, put in the rear seat of the cruiser and had the statement made to him "O.K. you kinky haired bastard, what are you up to are you guys trying to overthrow the police?"

Ernest Masey interrupted frequently with questions and the frequent statement to the Inspectors that the Stop and Frisk Law wasn't yet on the books.

Everyone present participated in the basic interchange of ideas concerning the problem. Generally, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Inspector Werner asked for time to "do some educating" and to have a long talk with the officers. He stated that the policy was going to be laid down that boys should be taken to the nearest station if there is reason for holding them.
2. It was agreed that a list would be drawn up of all teenagers effected by police pickup, the list submitted to the pertinent stationhouse, and a written statement drawn up in each case absolving teenagers of guilt. Inspector Werner agreed to this.
3. In addition to this, I added a suggestion. The compilation of the list be done on a permanent basis by the Infernos. Each student should be advised that when stopped by the police, the proper procedure would be to do anything requested by the police, but to get the badge number and report it. I felt that the offending officers might be more easily discovered.
4. Another meeting was scheduled for January 17 to see if any of the problems have been resolved. I got the distinct impression that Ralph Rosenfeld was attempting to over organize what had been a very constructive meeting.
5. In addition, Inspector Werner promised to bring back to Palmer Park an Officer Johnson and his partner, recently transferred to another precinct and who had previously become quite friendly with and respected by the Infernos group.

The most important contact I made during the evening was with Leon Atchison, who is in charge of the police brutality investigation program for John Conyers. He suggested that we take any future brutality complaints which come through our office to his office, as he feels that through the Justice Department he may be able to make more effective disposition than is now occurring through CCB.

The meeting was very interesting, not only because of the excellent discussion of practical and theoretical problems, but also because of the parties interested enough to attend.

I shall be interested to see the results of the second meeting of this group.

LW:vt